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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)

SUBJECT: WILL SPEAKER LUPU STAY WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY?

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Despite widespread rumors that he may split from the Communist Party (PCRM) in the wake of his public disagreements with President Voronin, Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament Marian Lupu may stay with the PCRM in the hopes of succeeding Voronin and transforming the PCRM into a moderate, centrist force. However, if he does not get a top position within the party at the PCRM Congress in March 2008, Lupu may leave the party to launch a political career of his own. Alternatively, he may opt for a leadership role in Filat's recently formed Liberal Democratic Party. End summary.

PCRM Rethinks Strategy after 2007 Local Elections

¶2. (C) The Communist Party's poor performance in the 2007 municipal and mayoral elections raised questions about the party's staying power and prompted discussions about the need for a major overhaul of the PCRM's policies and strategies. Given the party's loss of electoral appeal, it appears that further erosion of its political clout in the 2009 parliamentary elections is likely, unless it finds a new direction and some fresh blood.

Voronin: Belligerence the Way Forward

¶3. (C) PCRM leaders have offered conflicting solutions to the party's loss of electoral support. One was articulated publicly in the press by President Voronin in July. Voronin argued that the party must revert to its pre-2005 belligerence and halt its cooperation with opposition parties. The President stated that the party could best juxtapose its successes in running the country and undertaking market reforms to the ineptitude of opposition parties. This message could find some resonance, as the majority coalitions created by opposition parties after the 2007 local elections have proven fragile and have been marked by much squabbling.

Lupu Offers Different Vision

¶4. (C) Parliament Speaker Marian Lupu, who is seen as a possible successor to President Voronin and frequently serves as an attractive democratic facade for the PCRM, has articulated a different vision. The Speaker, who is second in command after the President, publicly contradicted Voronin this past summer, calling for continued cooperation with opposition parties and urging far-reaching reforms within the PCRM. Lupu reckoned the PCRM's excessive belligerence could alienate the opposition and lead to a political stalemate in the next parliament.

The Communist Party's Two Wings

15. (C) Voronin's charisma and clout are crucial to keeping the PCRM's older, orthodox supporters, who value a paternalistic, omnipresent government. Lupu has said publicly that he wants to reform the party into a centrist force to win voters whose priorities include EU integration, market reforms and wider economic opportunities. He recently told the Ambassador that the elderly supporters of the Communist Party name are dying out and that the future lies in wooing the youth. However, deep reform within the party could alienate the first group without luring the second.

Lupu's Decision

16. (C) Aides to Voronin's key strategist, Mark Tkaciuk, have told us that Lupu is a responsible and trustworthy leader who will stay with the party and would never "stab" it in the back by leaving. Lupu owes his career to Voronin and has little, if any, independent stature within the PCRM. He is also noted for being circumspect and vacillating. It is not clear that he has the will necessary either for sustained infighting that would be needed to start a new political party or for prolonged negotiations needed to push through fundamental change within the PCRM. He might, therefore, prefer the path of least resistance by seeking to succeed Voronin instead of confront him.

17. (C) The key event which will decide the fate of the PCRM (and Lupu's position within it) will be the Party Congress scheduled for March 15, 2008. The Congress will overhaul the party's programs and policies and promote new leaders. If the Congress does not promote Lupu to a key position within the party or fails to give him enough say in reforming the

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party, he may split from the PCRM. While it is possible that he would seek to form his own party, he mentioned to the Ambassador that the recently established Liberal Democratic party headed by Vladimir Filat was an attractive possibility and offered a very interesting platform.
KIRBY